

Final Fantasy V: Requiem for the Forgotten King

by Ajora

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Summary: This story makes a rather foolish attempt to merge the original Epic of Gilgamesh with the FFV storyline. Eh, it works.

Final Fantasy V: Requiem for the Forgotten King

Final Fantasy V: Nig-Er Su Lugal Nu-Kanpa by Morgaine MacLir

Generic disclaimer and author's notes: FFV is copyright by Squaresoft; this fic focuses on Gilgamesh, possibly one of the greatest characters in both history and Final Fantasy. The one original character mentioned in this fic is a recurring figure in almost all my works under one name or another... so, um, please don't kidnap the boy without asking. The title is in Sumerian, meaning "Requiem for the Forgotten King", and the reference material used for the background are Stephanie Dalley's translations of the Standard Babylonian tablets found at Nineveh. Oh, and all FFV-type info is from my own translations, so FFAnthology's translators can bite me or something ;). WARNING: there are some shounen ai elements, so if you're prone to vomiting at the very mention of love between two men, go away ^-^. Please mail me feedback at faris@amity.org

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Before the two worlds merged he was to his own what Ghido was in the Sister World: a hierophant, a sage whose every word was revered by all. But now, with the Library of the Ancients he called his home sucked into the Void, he had nothing. Nothing save for his relationship with one of the Light Warriors and a need to keep an eye on her. And as a student of history, this was the perfect time to experience the making of history first-hand.

He followed the Light Warriors, hiding in the shadows when they turned to look back, ever thankful that the one who raised him rarely got into any harm that couldn't be amended by her fellow warriors. It simply would not do to reveal himself at a time like this.

The hierophant paused briefly to sit and draw out pieces of dried meat and fruit for consumption from a small pouch hidden in the folds of his black robes. The monsters here could not touch him, for none could penetrate the meter-wide forcefield he had set up around himself.

Odd place this was... it existed, and yet it did not. The earth underfoot was hard-packed gypsum and rock crystal, dyed blue by the spilling of so many monsters' blood for countless years. The air was dry and stale and gave him the impression that it was confined by an invisible shell that enveloped the area and that the void beyond truly was space. What little vegetation there was grew only against the jagged quartz formations that jutted out from the edges of the ground and pulsed with unnatural light. And, ah, the monsters... they were plentiful, certainly, but for all their frustrated efforts they could not attack inside his shell.

While he ate and contemplated the nature of this Cleft of Dimensions, he heard something run towards him and paid little attention. After all, he was safely nested in his little fort.

And he was completely and utterly stunned when a man-like beast tripped over him in its rush.

As he rose, the hierophant brushed his robes free of dust and stared with wide amber eyes at the creature who had not only managed to penetrate his shield, but actually did not see him in its path and stumbled over his much smaller form. The creature must have been a man once, but now he had eight very heavily muscled arms sheathed in brownish-grey skin. It looked up at the boy before it with a mixture of surprise and suspicion.

"What are you and what are you doing here, kid," the creature rasped in a voice that was probably at one time a rich bass. It kept its eyes on the boy as it slowly rose and gathered its weapons that had been scattered in its rush to escape.

"I am merely a hierophant, nothing more," the boy stated, brushing sunset-red hair out of his face in nervousness. "My name is Red Halisyn, and I will not harm you if you have no ill intension for me."

"Gilgamesh is what I was once called... I'm not sure WHAT I am anymore."

The child-mage sat back down and gestured that Gilgamesh do the same. After a moment's hesitation the creature did so, and there was a flash as the forcefield extended to include the old warrior into its protection. Red offered his new-found associate a strip of dried jerky.

"What were you running from?"

"Running to," the warrior corrected. "I was running to the exit that Butz pointed out for me. I don't belong here."

Red pulled a few crystals of various colors and shapes and set them in a pattern on the ground between them. "Then where do you belong?"

An uncomfortable silence fell between the two, until at last the warrior let out a sigh. "In a kingdom long dead, in the past... If I stay here I'll die in obscurity."

"Obscurity," the hierophant intoned as he finished his pattern. "That is what you fear the most, is it not?"

At the answering nod, Red continued. "I may be a mage, I may be a hierophant, but my strongest passion in life has always been history. There are too many gaps in the Ancient Library's documentation of the Sister World, even with what Ghido and the scholars at Surgate have told us. You are the closest link to ExDeath that we know of. If it would not trouble you... would you mind telling me your story so that I may transcribe it?"

Gilgamesh settled into a more comfortable position and crossed a few of his arms to ponder exactly what he wanted the world to know. It wasn't every day a high-ranking figure like a Hierophant asked to tell his life story to be immortalized, and he'd need to be careful. When he looked up at the mage he noticed a bemused smile on the boy's face.

"I can detect lies," Red stated, and gestured at the circular pentacle the crystals were set in. One of them, a cluster of negative garnet crystals, glowed a dull blood red in acknowledgment. "So I would highly advise against such actions."

"Damn. Ah well, let me begin, shall I?"

"I was born the son of King Lugulbanda of Uruk and Ninsun, his queen. When I ascended the throne I was, admittedly, not the best choice for the position. I'd stir up trouble for the hell of it, abused my status to bed anyone I took a fancy to, picked fights with the local boys, sounded the city's klaxons just to watch people scramble madly about. And instead of confronting me about it, my subjects prayed to their gods to do something about my behavior. Weeks later, I think, a hunter's son appealed to me in regards to a wild man who tampered with his work, and I sent a priestess of the goddess of Love to join the hunter and educate this man who lived as a beast so that he may be sent to Uruk to meet me."

"Sucker for a fight, correct," the child-mage smirked as he repositioned one of the crystals ever so slightly. It gleamed as the wall around them shimmered and pulled them out of the flow of time. "This priestess, what was her name?"

"Shamhat. Pretty girl, but too... ah... experienced for my tastes. And the wild man was Enkidu. To continue..."

"I made it custom that I was to... uh... greet any newlyweds; and one day when I went to do so, a man with a form much like my own stood in my path. We grappled for a while, and I don't remember who it was that won, but after awhile we became something more than friends. My mother accepted Enkidu as she would another son, and I loved him as a man would a wife. While the years gave Enkidu and I wives and children, we were always in each other's company."

"One night Enkidu had a dream of a great beast with a face so wrinkled that it took the appearance of a sacrifice's intestines and

whose breath carried fire and death, whose voice was so thunderous it could be heard for sixty leagues. This creature filled him with such fear that I made it my duty to destroy it so that my friend could sleep in peace. Enkidu was hesitant when I told him my plans, however, and tried to prevent me from journeying to Moore's great forest to challenge this Humbaba. My reason for this were threefold: to keep it from haunting him, to cut down the great trees which I planned to use to rebuild the gates of my city's walls, and should I die in battle I knew Enkidu would return to Uruk and tell everyone that I had passed on with honor. Unable to distract me from my self-imposed mission, he agreed, and together we set forth alone to the great forests of Moore.

"Dreams haunted our journey but Enkidu did his best to reassure me that they were meant to be interpreted as good omens, and yet when we came before the Moore forests my friend became paralyzed with fear. I kissed and comforted him with recounts of our own victories before, and I promised to protect him.

"With my companion reassured we proceeded into the forest and followed the well-worn track left by Humbaba. We battled the great monster, and when I had the thing in a deadly grip it tried to talk me into sparing its life, and yet Enkidu encouraged me to make the killing blow. Now I wish I had left it to live."

"Why is that," Red asked as he turned another facet of the large clear quartz to face Gilgamesh. The warrior's dark brown eyes returned to a pair of loose fists between his knees.

"Humbaba was the guardian of a four hundred year old seal, and when Enkidu and I killed him, we broke that seal. We cut down seven pines that circled a withered, deformed old oak and saw to it that they were prepared and sent by a barge to Uruk. Sometime during the lumber-gathering Enkidu was pricked by a splinter when he leaned against the gnarled tree, and after being unable to pick it out he thought that perhaps we should take the oak along as well, if for nothing other than a carved figure depicting our victory over the vile protector of the forest.

"For some reason or another we forgot about that one old tree, even though it lay abandoned a short walk from my city's walls. It was as if the thing no longer existed. I don't suppose you're interested in the time I turned down a foreign princess' proposal and she sent a weapon called a 'Bull of Heaven' after Enkidu and I, would you?"

The boy looked thoughtful as he gazed at his arrangement of recording and ritual crystals. There was a low hum from the milky quartz that indicated that the recording crystal was somewhat low on energy, and he silently cursed himself for his shortsightedness. "I hope we can go over that story later, for at the moment my recorder is dying and I forgot to bring along a recharge crystal or a replacement. Would you continue with the main story?"

"Ana-ku igi," Gilgamesh muttered as he studied his fists with unusual intensity. His heart clenched as he remembered all too well what would come next... however long ago he lost his friend, the wound was still there, and it had yet to fully heal.

"Years passed, and Enkidu became sick with something no one could

identify. It started with an ominous dream, and since then his health spiraled steadily downwards until at last he died in his sleep. Ana-ku... Enkidu, mu ashta za e..."

"We can stop for a bit if this is too hard on you, sir," the hierophant whispered as he dug through his robes to find a handkerchief for his companion. "After all, we have all the time in the world."

"No, I'll continue..."

"I stayed by his side day and night, unable to leave him; and for a week I did not allow him to be buried. When he was I mourned deeply and left my city to wander alone in the wilderness. I could not stand being in the room we shared any longer.

"Time found me sleeping at last, in the shelter of the corpse of an ancient oak. The night gave me a dream in which I felt my friend, alive and well and resting by my side. Yet when I moved to embrace him I felt only the rough hide of the tree in my arms and when I tried to release it the bark had grown over my arms and roots wove into my flesh. I awoke with a scream, yet when I looked again at the dead tree I felt it move ever so slightly, and I ignored it in my preoccupation.

"Since Enkidu died I became greatly fearful of death and longed only for immortality. It got to the point where I would give up everything for it, and while I thought over this a voice that was as dark and as rich as the forests of Moore asked if I really would give up everything. I turned to look for the voice, and watched as the flesh of the dead tree twisted into the face of a thin, hungry-looking man. It gave its name as Enuo, and offered Enkidu's return and my own immortality if I would do as it wished.

"I gave up my country, my people, everything just to see my friend stand before me and hold him again. His body was the same as it had been before his illness, yet his eyes... there was something inhuman about them, but I ignored it and continued to do so. For a hundred years I did not age or die, for I allowed Enuo, who had taken the title "He who Exceeds Death", to control me and my kingdom. Castle ExDeath went up where Uruk used to stand with its temples and houses, and its walls were built of the flesh and bones of my citizens. And yet I turned my face from their suffering to dream of better times.

"The years passed and the Dawn Warriors came, and when they sealed ExDeath I retreated with Enkidu. We dwelled together at the mountain-encased Northern Lake, and despair overtook me as I slowly realized that there was no spirit in Enkidu's body, it was just a shell acting out past memories. ExDeath came again, and again I went into battle for him with little conscious thought. Yet always nagging in the back of my mind was the need to set things right.

"Every time I had to battle the Light Warriors I made up an excuse and ran away, hoping secretly that they would eliminate ExDeath and my bond to him. I'm here now because he had finally seen that my incompetence was intentional."

"Thank you," Red whispered as he picked up the crystals from their pattern and replaced them in their pouch. "For what it counts, Lord

Gilgamesh, Castle ExDeath no longer exists, and you can rest at ease knowing that I was the one who oversaw that the priests sent the spirits on their way to the next life. They have no malice for you."

"Then why does the knowledge of my inaction hang so heavily on my heart," the ancient king asked forlornly as he rose at the boy's unvoiced invitation.

"Conscience. It will continue to eat at you until you find a cause worthy of your sacrifice."

The wall around them dispelled and time continued on its normal path. Red looked up at this sad old king who had lost so much and gave a reassuring smile. "The Light Warriors will soon encounter a monster that is much too powerful for them. It is your choice to either leave them be or aid them. And should you die then it would be an honorable passing."

Gilgamesh gave a thoughtful look. He had nothing more to lose, and it would indeed be an honorable death. Enkidu, if his spirit was watching, would be proud. He then thanked the young hierophant and proceeded to the higher tiers of the Cleft of Dimensions.

When Gilgamesh disappeared into the warp field that would take him to his death, Red sighed and leaned against a crystalline wall. A rosy crystal sphere he had pulled out when Gilgamesh was telling his tale showed the man's noble self-sacrifice, and Red replayed that scene once again. He walked slowly towards the warp point and checked his memories for any mention of funeral rites of the people of the Sister World.

As he did so his well-trained soprano rose above the din caused by the monsters. They paused in their howling as he sang his requiem, and settled into dreamy stupor. When he got back to the Library he would sing it for his fellow scholars too, but for now it was for a king who loved his friend so deeply that the friend's passing ripped a great cleft in his heart which could not heal, for a king who so loved his country that he built great walls of the finest timber for it, for a king whom history forgot.

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file.